

RESOLUTION NO. 2014-54

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA REAFFIRMING AND EXPRESSING ITS SUPPORT THAT THE DESIGNATION OF RURAL AREA OF OPPORTUNITY (RAO), FORMERLY KNOWN AS RURAL AREA OF CRITICAL ECONOMIC CONCERN (RACEC) CONTINUE TO APPLY TO THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA REGION INCORPORATING THE COUNTIES OF CALHOUN, FRANKLIN, GADSDEN, GULF, HOLMES, JACKSON, LIBERTY, WAKULLA, WASHINGTON AND THE CITY OF FREEPORT ((INCLUDING THE CITIES, TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES WITHIN EACH); THAT ALL ENTERPRISE ZONES IN THESE COUNTIES AND COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO EXIST; THE CONTINUATION OF ALL STAFFING GRANT FUNDING FOR THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INCORPORATED, D/B/A OPPORTUNITY FLORIDA, THROUGH FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE AND ADMINISTERED THROUGH FLORIDA'S DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE NO LATER THAN JANUARY 8, 2015.

WHEREAS, in 1999 Governor Bush, by Executive Order, identified eight counties (Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty and Washington) as Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern, and that this designation was renewed in 2004 and added the area within the city limits of Freeport to this designation; and

WHEREAS, in 2000 Opportunity Florida was created to promote and improve economic development in the eight counties designated as Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern; and

WHEREAS, the counties of Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Washington and the area within the city limits of Freeport were re-designated in 2009, as Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern for a period of five years; and

WHEREAS, the designation of Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern has been renamed as Rural Areas of Opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the various counties and municipalities in the Opportunity Florida region request that Governor Rick Scott renew the designation of Rural Areas of Opportunity (formerly RACEC);

WHEREAS, the Northwest Florida Business Development Council, Inc., in cooperation with and through the support of nine counties, all municipalities within the nine counties, the city of Freeport, all CareerSource Centers serving the region and corporate sector partners, has made great strides in improving the economic outlook for the Northwest Florida RAO (formerly RACEC) by assisting with recruiting new industries, supporting infrastructure projects and the working together with local communities and other organizations such as the Department of Economic Opportunity, Enterprise Florida, FDOT and the Governor's Office; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the progress that has been made since 2009, there is still much work that needs to be done to help these nine counties compete economically with other parts of the state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners does hereby express its continued support of the following:

1. That the designation "Rural Area of Opportunity," formerly referred to as "Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern," continue to apply to Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Wakulla and Washington counties and the city of Freeport;
2. That all existing Enterprise Zones in these counties continue to exist; and
3. That all staff grant funding for Opportunity Florida be continued and expanded for the Northwest Florida Business Development Council, Inc. through funds appropriated by the Florida Legislature and administered through Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity, Enterprise Florida, Inc., and other designated agencies.

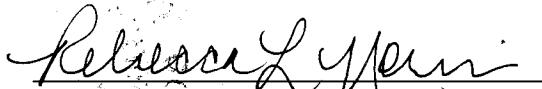
DULY ADOPTED this 25th, day of November, 2014.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA**

BY: 

WARD MCDANIEL, Chairman

ATTEST:


Gulf County Clerk of Court